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# NURSING IN MISSION STATIONS



## A LETTER FROM THE MISSION NURSING HOME, DURBAN, SOUTH AFRICA

DEAR AMERICAN NURSES: Just a few words from the wilds of Africa, or, properly speaking, the garden of the world.

I landed here about one year ago and was so tired from my long voyage that I should have welcomed land of almost any description and could almost have smilingly greeted a cannibal. We stopped for one day in Cape Town and I shall never forget the penetrating sun's rays as reflected from the white, towering rocks of Table Mountain. The doctor prepared me for a veritable furnace in Durban. I remember speaking of the heat in Cape Town. He said, "You just wait until we get to Durban; it is so hot there that you cannot raise an umbrella for fear it will catch fire."

When I arrived here everything was beautifully green, delightfully cool, and in every way ideal.

Now just a word about my work. Dr. McCord is a well-known medical missionary and the Zulus come to him from great distances. The dispensary where he sees his patients is located near the centre of Durban but the most interesting place to me is the hospital. This is next door to the doctor's home on the herea, a high ridge overlooking Durban. I have five girls who have come from mission schools. Into their brains I am slowly and patiently (perhaps) trying to instil a few essential points in nursing. Truly, though, they are very intelligent. The patients are not admitted into the hospital until they have previously consulted the doctor at the dispensary. When we have a new patient who is a heathen woman, she hesitatingly approaches the hospital with probably her grandmother, her husband, a few children, and friends. The native nurses assure her that we will refrain from devouring her at once, and after much persuasion she consents to have a general scrubbing and shampoo. The hair is usually artistically arranged in a psyche behind, by means of red clay and wire, which can only be removed by much diligence, labor, and hot soapsuds. After the toilet is complete, she is ushered upstairs to her ward, where she is treated very much like an ordinary patient in an ordinary hospital.

M. S. MACNEILL.

P. S.—Speaking of cannibals, one of our venerable missionaries says that the only weapon we need in Natal is a package of insect powder.